

Operations for the Tenant Relations Division's fifth fiscal year which came to a close August 31, 1959, were satisfactory and followed in general the pattern established during the preceding four years. The workers of the division continued their many and varied duties: making home visits; counseling in areas of housekeeping, rent paying and other tenancy matters; referring families to indicated social agencies and conferring with agencies, relatives and other resources in their behalf; assisting tenant councils; making evaluations and recommendations; recording and preparing reports for management; making necessary appearances in court; and doing the various and sundry tasks required to carry out the work of the division and attain the goals set by management.

How successful the division has been in meeting the challenges of the year may be seen by the material which follows and the tables presented in this report.

Referrals have come in to the division in a steady flow. During the year from September 1, 1958 to August 31, 1959, the division received a total of 541 referrals and handled a total of 1100 referrals. Table I which follows shows the number of referrals received, handled, and closed during the year:

TABLE I

Referrals active at end of fiscal year 1957/58	- - - - -	559
Referrals received during fiscal year 1958/59	- - - - -	541
Referrals handled during fiscal year 1958/59	- - - - -	1100
Referrals completed and closed during fiscal year 1958/59	- - - - -	602
Referrals active at end of fiscal year 1958/59	- - - - -	498

The total of 1100 referrals handled during the fifth year compares with previous years:

1st year	501
2nd year	657
3rd year	1022
4th year	1100
5th year	1100

It can be observed from the figures shown in the table that the last two years have been equal in number of referrals handled and they have been peak years.

Out of the 1100 families which were serviced by the division during the year, only 96 failed to respond to efforts to a degree acceptable to the Authority. Since performance was unsatisfactory and beyond the ability of the division and the interested agencies to improve, it became necessary to recommend eviction. The great bulk of the families with whom we worked, however, did respond, and we feel that our effort this fifth fiscal year has resulted in another favorable record and that the fifth year's record is a continuance of the favorable record of the preceding four years.

The following table summarizes the results achieved on the 602 cases that were closed during the year.

TABLE II
CLOSED CASES

Improvement	437
Moveout	67
Eviction	<u>96</u>
Total	<u>602</u>

The following restates the table in percentage terms and makes comparison with percentages for previous years:

TABLE III
CLOSED CASES

	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>1958/59</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>1957/58</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Prev. Year</u>
Improvement	72.6%	71.9%	78.9%
Moveout	11.1	10.5	9.9
Eviction	<u>16.3</u>	<u>17.6</u>	<u>11.2</u>
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Growth in the moveout figure reflects our efforts to persuade undesirable tenants to move of their own accord rather than face eviction proceedings. Numbered among our moveouts also are five elderly tenants who died during contact, and a number of elderly tenants, lonely, ill, frightened or handicapped, who were persuaded to enter nursing homes where they could get the care they needed.

Our workers hold in view always the basic objective of the division, which in its broad aim is a good life for all our project residents, and in its immediate aim is a better tenancy and a reduction in tenant turnover due to problem tenants. Our focus is the family in their day-to-day living.

The division during the year received a number of referrals from sources other than management; some from Tenant Selection Division for evaluation for admission; some from courts asking for assistance for families who appeared in court; one or two from central office asking for investigations into situations brought to their attention.

Several of the referrals received were larger than single family referrals and required many visits and interviews. There were hallway referrals

for cleanup in whole buildings or entrances. A building at one of our large high-rise projects, housing many large families, was referred because unruly gangs of teen agers gathered within and around the building starting many gang fights, annoying tenants, causing disturbances. All families who had teen age children were visited, interviews were held with the parents and with the youngsters. We also arranged for conferences with various agencies who could help. By a heavy concentration of effort on the part of this division and the cooperating agencies, we were able to keep a situation potentially dangerous from mushrooming out beyond control. A full report was sent management April, 1959. During the year, too, another large project made a bulk referral of 51 families who had received a poor housekeeping rating in annual inspections. A cleanup campaign was undertaken with the cooperation of an inspector from the Board of Health. This effort was very largely successful and an eight page report went to management in April 1959 followed by further later reports.

In addition to our regular work with referred families, our workers are being called upon more and more by tenants to act in a consultative capacity. Tenants in our projects have come to know our workers well and go to them for advice and help with social agencies. Often, the request is for emergency help. Consultations of this sort may involve a visit or two, may require one or more telephone calls to an agency geared to give emergency help. With situations requiring a number of contacts, we try to make a short consultation report, but with the many where-can-I-go-for-help appeals, time does not permit recording or even counting. Brief consultations of this sort have become a natural part of the work of the division.

Throughout the year, we have continued our policy of close cooperation with the various public and private agencies. Through conferences, formal and informal, we have been able to obtain services for the benefit of our tenants, and we have also continued to interpret to the agencies the policies and procedures of the Authority.

The 541 referrals which we received this year represented a total of 629 tenancy problems. Table IV which follows breaks down this total into figures for the separate problem categories. Percentages for this year are shown with comparative percentages for preceding years:

TABLE IV
PROBLEM FREQUENCY

	<u>Referrals</u> <u>1958/59</u>	<u>Percentage</u> <u>1958/59</u>	<u>Percentage</u> <u>1957/58</u>	<u>Combine</u> <u>Prev.Yr</u>
Hallways	8	1.3	4.3	6.5
Housekeeping	151	24.0	12.6	24.2
Rent Delinquency	15	2.4	3.6	13.1
Vandalism	10	1.6	1.6	.9
Discord-Noise	35	5.6	6.4	10.4
Juvenile Delinquency	26	4.0	5.6	7.5
Between Neighbors	42	6.7	8.1	11.1
Parental Neglect	24	3.8	2.9	2.1
Family Problem	105	16.7	13.3	5.6
Income and Family Comp.	84	13.3	15.0	9.5
Undesirable Conduct	92	14.6	11.8	5.5
Uncooperative Attitude	12	2.0	3.9	1.0
Others (TS Evaluations, Indoct. etc.)	<u>25</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>10.9</u>	<u>2.6</u>
	<u>629</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

As will be seen from the above table, all problems with the exception of three (housekeeping; undesirable conduct; family problems) have remained substantially the same in percentage or have lessened.

The major recurring problem facing management remains poor housekeeping. The habitually poor housekeeper will have her ups and downs. Housekeeping will improve during the division's contact, may slip back afterward, improve

again with re-referral, and slip back again. It may have to be recognized that some families will need periodic help. Poor housekeeping too is often symptomatic of other ills, as poor health, limited income, old age, retardation. When assistance is brought in for the contributing problem, the poor housekeeping problem becomes soluble.

Undesirable conduct refers to cases referred because of suspicion of immorality, children born out of wedlock, alcoholism, narcotics, reports of crime. These referrals reflect the Authority's concern for the reputation of its projects and the welfare of its tenants, also the Authority's desire to keep the number of problem families down to an absorbable number.

Family problems consist of referrals for:

- Mental disturbance
- Physical handicaps
- Retardation
- Old Age problems
- Financial hardship
- Family discord
- etc.

Each problem is given patient and considerate treatment. Investigations are sometimes intensive. Procedures include home visits, counseling, and utilization of available community resources. Each situation is evaluated carefully and impartially before action is recommended. When counseling and warnings fail to bring about correction, tenants are recommended for eviction.

We feel that on the whole our efforts are encouraging better care of the apartments; a greater recognition of the need to conform to the Authority's standards and requirements; and generally better relations among tenants and between the tenant and the Authority.

Increase in categories "housekeeping" and "family problems" is partly accounted for, too, by the increased number of elderly tenants now residing in our projects and the rise in number of elderly families referred. Increase in minimum rent affected those families who had limited fixed incomes as social security. Families formerly just able to get by were faced with the problem of insufficient income. Persuasions to apply to agencies for supplementary income met with a variety of reluctances; the feeling that going to an agency meant asking for "charity"; the hesitation to have their children bothered; the desire to hold on to small ownerships, as insurance or savings.

In our dealings with the elderly, we have had to develop new finessees. Direct or emphatic action such as used with younger and abler people cannot be used with the elderly. Our approach has to be more understanding, more sympathetic, more altruistic. Yet, we have to maintain standards. Our procedures include counseling; interviews with relatives, friends, church; conferences with agencies.

Three cases involving elderly tenants are presented to illustrate typical situations confronting the Authority, and the part this division has played:

Case #1 - Mrs. G, age 77

Mrs. G was referred because she was observed wandering about project grounds, weeping, unhappy and neglected looking. On our visit, we noticed she was absent-minded, forgetful, lonely. The apartment was dirty and smelly. Mrs. G's daughter, herself a grandmother, visited occasionally but could not come often because of other family obligations. Clearly, Mrs. G was no longer able to adequately care for herself and her apartment. We arranged interviews with the daughter and discussed the advisability of a home for the aged for her mother. The daughter agreed this was a good idea and selected a suitable home.

However, Mrs. G objected. Plans were made with the daughter to persuade Mrs. G that this was a good provision for her. A clergyman of her persuasion was asked to see her and talk about the plan. The home was also contacted and they invited Mrs. G to come and visit. Mrs. G finally came to see that the plan was a good one for her and agreed to go. Arrangements were completed. (This case is numbered among our "moveouts").

Case #2 - Mrs. B, age 66

Mrs. B moved into the project with a nephew. Aunt and nephew disagreed and the nephew moved, leaving Mrs. B alone in the apartment. Mrs. B's sole income was a social security grant of \$31 a month. We arranged for Mrs. B to make application at Essex County Welfare Board for supplementation. Supplementation was granted. Mrs. B now has an adequate income and maintains her apartment.

Case #3 - Mrs. W, age 83

Mrs. W died alone in her apartment and the body remained undiscovered for about three weeks. When found, it was in an advanced state of decomposition. Police took charge to determine cause of death.

Mrs. W had been receiving support and supervision from Essex Co. Welfare Board. We got in touch with the agency, with the police, and with relatives. We learned of a nephew who lived in Sea Girt. ECWB worker told us that on her last visit, Mrs. W appeared adequately well and was receiving medical care. She was known to suffer with hypertension but the situation at the time of the agency's visit did not appear in any way critical. Mrs. W was homebound. She did not leave her apartment. Someone did her shopping for her and brought her rent to the office.

After police determined death due to natural causes, the nephew was notified and he took care of the funeral arrangements and the disposition of effects. (This case too is numbered among "move-outs").

Problems of the elderly are receiving our emphasized consideration as we expect increase of such referrals, particularly when our projects for the elderly are built. Agency services at present, over and above support, are woefully limited, particularly home care services. We have had talks with representatives from the New Jersey State Division of Aging who are presently engaged in making a study of the needs of the elderly, preparatory to inaugurating programs to expand facilities. We keep an up-to-date inventory of all available resources, and we are in constant touch with government and private organizations who are developing resources for the elderly.

It is not our wish to give the impression that our elderly tenants as a group are poor tenants. Our experience indicates that quite the contrary is true. Elderly tenants generally make very good tenants. They have a love for home, they are clean, quiet. They make good neighbors, have many interesting hobbies which they are willing to share. However, passing years mean declining abilities, and with the old, breakdown may come sudden and swift.

In our special events department, there were the usual Christmas distributions of toys and Thanksgiving distributions of baskets, donated by private donors and by agencies. There were helps to families to procure needed furniture, clothing, bedding. Assistance was given tenant councils in organizing activities. Many children of tenants through our efforts received summer campships. A showcase event sponsored by the Executive Director called on the services of the professional agencies for continuing programs within project area, with the aim of bringing agency services closer to families needing services. Events of the year included: a sponsored tour of public housing by a group of students and teachers from Newark's high schools; a festive celebration at Kretschmer; a Golden Age anniversary party at Columbus Homes.

Five years, half a decade, has passed since the Tenant Relations Division began operations. We feel we have come a long way since our early bricklaying days. In these five years, we have had nearly 3000 referrals, an average of 600 a year. Our workers have seen and spoken to thousands of tenants. The division has received the cooperation and encouragement of the agencies, the courts, and the community organizations. Requests have come in from many distant points for copies of "The Newark Story."

Further expansion of the Authority's tenant relations program is foreseen. The new year will find management engaged in the integration of a new project, NJ 2-15, into its low rent housing program, adding 1206 new families to its tenancy. An additional 500 units will be built for the exclusive use of elderly persons.

We look back over our record for the past five years with a feeling of accomplishment. We look forward to even greater responsibility with a feeling of confidence.